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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that teaching writing effectively to diverse students of non-English backgrounds will require an examination of existing views about the nature of writing and a critical evaluation of the profession's ability to work with bilingual individuals of different types. Part 1 of the paper suggests that existing compartmentalization within the composition profession cannot address the needs of American bilingual minorities. Part 2 describes the nature of bilingualism and identifies the population of students who can be classified as American bilingual minorities. Part 3 of the paper reviews trends in current scholarship in second language writing and points out that most of this research has focused on English-as-a-Second Language students rather than on fluent/functional bilinguals. Part 4 of the paper lists and discusses a number of research directions in which the involvement and participation of mainstream scholars would be most valuable, and argues that the involvement in research on non-English-background populations by researchers who generally concentrate on mainstream issues would do much to break down the compartmentalization existing within the English composition profession. It further argues that by using bilingual individuals to study questions of major theoretical interest, the profession will strengthen the explanatory power of existing theories about the process and practice of writing in general. (Four figures are included; a list of 105 references is attached.) (Author/RS)

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WRITING

Technical Report No. 54

BILINGUAL MINORITIES AND LANGUAGE ISSUES IN WRITING: TOWARD PROFESSION-WIDE RESPONSES TO A NEW CHALLENGE

Guadalupe Valdés

October, 1991

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Abstract

This paper takes the position that teaching writing effectively to diverse students of non-English-background will require an examination of existing views about the nature of writing and a critical evaluation of the profession's ability to work with bilingual individuals of different types. In order to explain this view, the paper is divided into four parts. Part 1 suggests that existing compartmentalization within the composition profession cannot address the needs of American bilingual minorities. Part 2 describes the nature of bilingualism and identifies the population of students who can be classified as American bilingual minorities. Part 3 of the paper reviews trends in current scholarship in second-language writing and points out that most of this research has focused on ESL students rather than on fluent/functional bilinguals. Finally, Part 4 lists and discusses a number of research directions in which the involvement and participation of mainstream scholars would be most valuable. In presenting an outline of questions and issues fundamental to developing effective pedagogical approaches for teaching writing to bilingual minority students, this final section argues that involvement in research on non-English-background populations by researchers who generally concentrate on mainstream issues would do much to break down the compartmentalization now existing within the English composition profession. It further argues that by using bilingual individuals to study questions of major theoretical interest, the profession will strengthen the explanatory power of existing theories about the process and practice of writing in general.

About the Author

Guadalupe Valdés is a sociolinguist who specializes in the study of bilingualism broadly conceived. She has carried out research on English/Spanish bilinguals in a number of different settings and is the author of a forthcoming Ablex book entitled *The Nature of Bilingualism and the Nature of Testing*. Valdés is a professor in the Division of Language and Literacy of the Graduate School of Education, University of California at Berkeley. She has been affiliated with the Center for the Study of Writing since 1986 and is currently engaged in research on the development of writing in bilingual minority students.

BILINGUAL MINORITIES AND LANGUAGE ISSUES IN WRITING: TOWARD PROFESSION-WIDE RESPONSES TO A NEW CHALLENGE

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity and *multiculturalism* are the fashionable words of this new decade. Their use throughout the programs of most pedagogically oriented professional meetings, for example, reflects a concern about and an interest in the changing population of this country. Unfortunately, in many instances, the words *diversity* and *multiculturalism* are being used imprecisely and perhaps primarily because they are fashionable and politically correct.

In and of itself, political correctness is not a problem. Moreover, in the case of the English composition profession in particular, the deep commitment of many of its members to the education of non-mainstream students has been well established. Many serious efforts have been made by the members of organizations such as NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English), CCCC (Conference on College Composition and Communication), and MLA (Modern Language Association) to gain an understanding of issues and questions having to do with the writing of non-English-background students. Talking about diversity and inviting members of minority groups to address professional organizations at annual meetings is an important attempt to exchange information and to gain insights into these new areas of concern.

Discussions about diversity and multiculturalism, however, even for truly well-intentioned groups of professionals, are only a first step. Teaching the new population of this country, especially students who come from non-English-speaking backgrounds, will involve much more than "celebrating" cultural differences. Addressing the needs of these students will demand carefully planned pedagogical solutions based on an understanding of their unique characteristics.

For English composition professionals, working effectively with diverse students will require extensive knowledge about this new minority population. Very specifically, teaching non-English-background students must be based on a deep understanding of the nature of societal bilingualism and an examination of existing views about writing and the development of writing for bilingual individuals. It will demand a critical evaluation of the profession's own capacity to work with non-native-English-speaking students, and it will necessitate asking hard questions about the consequences of using approaches that were designed for native speakers with developing bilingual writers.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the efforts currently being made by the English composition profession to explore the role that it will play in working with diverse students from multicultural backgrounds. In particular, my objective is to describe for the profession the singular characteristics of the bilingual minority students who are now entering community colleges, colleges, and universities and to explore the questions that stem from these students' presence in regular English composition courses intended for native speakers.

In order to provide a framework for this discussion, I will first argue that the English composition profession must become aware that it is currently divided into a series of compartments. I will point out that this compartmentalization or specialization is based on views about the characteristics of the student population in this country that may be both

seriously outdated and inaccurate. More important, I will suggest that the persistence of such compartmentalization will directly affect the ways in which the profession will respond to present and future student needs. I will devote the second section of this paper to a description of minority bilingualism. I will present a general overview of the field and introduce key concepts that are relevant to both practitioners and researchers in the field of English composition. In the third section, I will review trends in current scholarship in the area of second-language writing and identify a series of existing lacunae in our knowledge about the writing of functional bilinguals. In the final section, I will present an outline of issues and questions that need to be explored by mainstream researchers. Throughout the paper, I will argue that unless we emphasize the importance of bilingual issues within the writing profession and particularly the significance of the questions that stem from the very nature of bilingualism, many individuals will continue to view language minority students as a problem that is exclusively the domain of a small group of specialists outside the mainstream of the English composition field.

THE COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF THE ENGLISH-TEACHING PROFESSION

As is the case with a number of other fields and professions, the English-teaching profession is divided into several different groups and segments. As Figure 1 illustrates, the profession includes two large and distinct areas of interest and expertise. These two areas are the teaching of English to native speakers of English and the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. As shown in Figure 1, the two compartments are of unequal size. The larger of the two compartments focuses on native English-speaking students. The smaller compartment is concerned with students who are not yet fully functional in the English language. The fact that these two areas are quite different can perhaps be best appreciated by examining the membership of professional organizations. Individuals who focus on the teaching of English to native speakers generally belong to organizations such as NCTE and CCCC. Individuals, on the other hand, who focus on the teaching of English to non-native speakers of English are generally members of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) or NABE (National Association of Bilingual Education). Even though there are segments within CCCC and NCTE that specialize in the writing of non-mainstream students, these two organizations are not generally known for their expertise on matters related to the teaching of English to students from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Figure 1 also shows that the largest group of English composition professionals focuses on the native English-speaking population, and most of this group's attention is directed at "mainstream" students, that is, at students who are native speakers of non-stigmatized or standard varieties of English. Much attention is also given to basic writers and to students who are speakers of nonstandard varieties of English. As I have conceptualized the compartments in this figure, students who are primarily monodialectal speakers of Black English, Appalachian English, and the like would be placed in the compartment dealing with speakers of nonstandard varieties. On the other hand, bidialectal students who can already speak and write mainstream English in addition to their own variety of English would be placed outside of this compartment. Some would still be in the basic writer section, but others would be placed in regular mainstream English classes. Within this larger compartment, it is possible for even bidialectal students to experience problems. As Farr and Daniels (1986, chap. 3) pointed out, research on writing and most of the theories underlying current practice have been developed with a focus on a mainstream and native-speaking population.[1]

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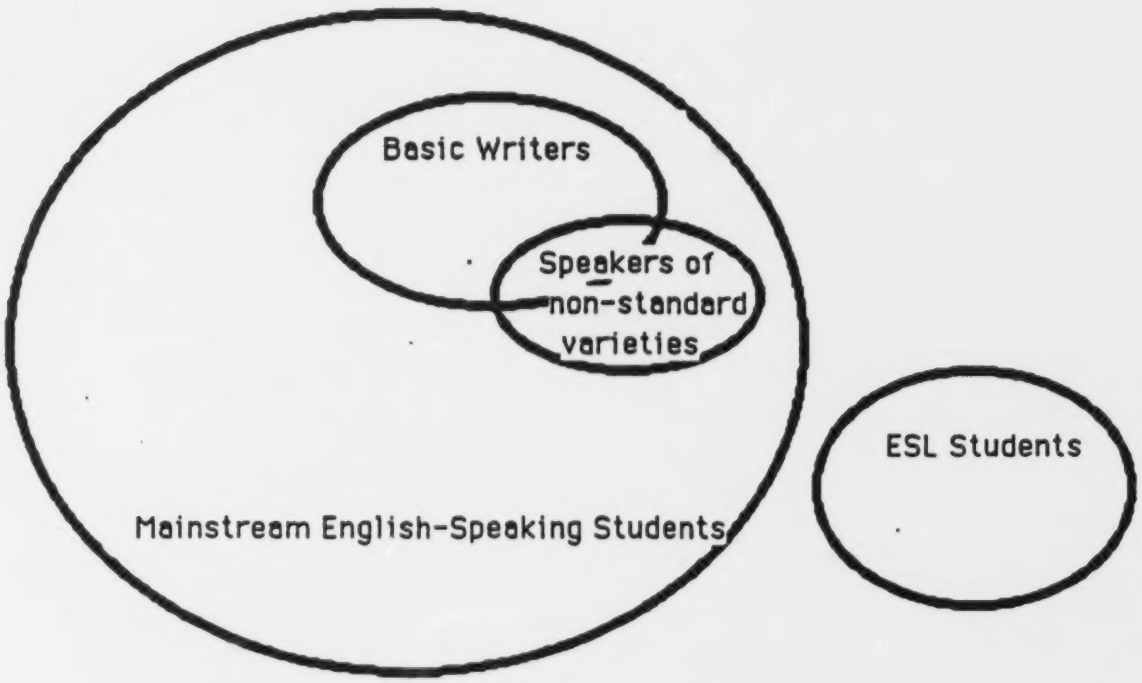
[1] In stating that the majority of the attention of the English composition profession has been aimed at speakers of non-stigmatized varieties of English, I do not mean to imply that there has been little interest in



* These diagrams are illustrative only. The exact size of the populations in question has not been established.

Figure 1. Compartments within the English composition profession.

As Figure 1 also illustrates, non-native-speaking students are seen as separate from students considered to have native-speaker competencies and as the province of specialists who have been trained to teach them English. The important point here is that, because of the way the compartments are structured within the profession, when non-native English-speaking students leave the ESL compartment, they must move directly into the native speaker domain. There is no other compartment for them to enter. Once out of ESL, non-native students enroll in classes with native speakers. Whether placed in the basic skills or non-mainstream-English compartments, these new speakers of English are expected to compete with and abide by the standards set for individuals who come into English composition courses with native-speaking strengths. Generally, very little systematic

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the writing of nonmainstream writers. Work carried out, for example, by Cronnell (1983, 1984), Farr Whiteman (1981), Farr and Janda (1985), and Wolfram and Whiteman (1971) on writing and dialect differences is well known to many members of the profession. In addition, the publication of work by Brooks (1985) and Farr and Daniels (1986) by NCTE has made evident that the English profession has made serious efforts at addressing the needs of non-mainstream students.

accommodation is made to the essential nature of the difference between these students and their native-speaking peers.

As I will argue in this paper, this position is inadequate in that it fails to take into consideration the complexities of bilingualism *per se* and in particular the special characteristics of American minority bilingualism. In my view, the existing compartmentalization, which is in evidence whenever issues of diversity or multiculturalism are discussed, results in a view of the nature of writing and the teaching of composition that can be potentially harmful to a large segment of the population of this country.

AMERICAN MINORITY BILINGUALISM

The Study of Bilingualism

The study of bilingualism is a complex and multifaceted area of inquiry. The literature on the subject is extensive and encompasses work carried out on both individual and societal bilingualism from the perspectives of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and pyscholinguistics. So vast indeed is the subject that reviews of the literature on bilingualism as a whole (e.g., Appel & Muysken, 1987; Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982; Grosjean, 1982; Hakuta, 1986; Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Romaine, 1989) are produced only in book-length form. Full treatments of the field of bilingualism generally include examinations of the various definitions of the term *bilingualism*, descriptions of different kinds and types of individual bilingualism, descriptions of the characteristics of the languages of various types of bilingual speakers, discussions about the problems involved in the measurement of bilingualism, syntheses of research conducted on bilingual communities of different types around the world, syntheses of research conducted on information processing in individual bilinguals, and overviews of the relationship between education and bilingualism. Partial treatments of the field and collections of research articles generally focus on particular subdomains such as American societal bilingualism (e.g., Ferguson & Heath, 1981; McKay & Wong, 1988); information processing in bilingual individuals (e.g., Albert & Obler, 1978; Vaid, 1986); childhood bilingualism (e.g., Bialystok, 1991; Garcia, 1983; Homel, Palij, & Aaronson, 1987); bilingualism and ethnic identity (e.g.,Fishman, 1989; Gudykunst, 1988); bilingualism and education (e.g., Cummins & Swain, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988; Spolsky, 1986); and first language attrition among bilinguals (e.g., Seliger & Vago, 1991).

In general, students of bilingualism have attempted to answer such questions as: how and why do individuals become bilingual? how are bilinguals different from monolinguals? how do individuals function in two languages? and how can bilingualism be measured? Beginning with the work of Weinreich (1953), research on bilingualism has been carried out by more and more researchers in many different settings around the world.[2]

From the work conducted to date, we now know that bilingualism is a widespread natural phenomenon that has come about in different places for different reasons and that factors such as movement of peoples, military conquest, and the expansion of religious practices have resulted in the acquisition of a second language by certain groups of people.[3]

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[2] Prior to the work carried out by Weinreich (1953) on bilingualism in Switzerland, some research had been carried out on bilingualism in the Americas. Haugen (1956) summarized this early work in a bibliography and research guide.

[3] For an excellent discussion of these factors, see Wardhaugh (1987).

We also know that, depending on the particular characteristics of the language contact,[4] individuals who acquire another language in addition to their first and who use both languages in the course of their everyday lives vary in their productive and receptive abilities in both languages. Certain individuals develop high productive and receptive abilities in the oral mode; others develop both productive and receptive abilities in both the oral and the written mode; and still others develop no productive control of either mode. Individuals who manifest only receptive abilities in the spoken language are known as receptive or passive bilinguals. Individuals who manifest productive abilities are known as productive bilinguals.[5]

In general, the research on bilingualism has concerned itself primarily with the study of the spoken language. Most studies have focused on *bilingualism* as opposed to *biliteracy*. The reasons for this focus are many. Some of these reasons have to do with the contexts in which bilingualism occurs,[6] and others have to do with the particular theoretical interests of linguists, sociolinguists, and psycholinguists who carried out this research. For a long period of time, for example, linguists were interested primarily in understanding how one language system used by a bilingual influenced the other system. They sought to describe this influence at the phonological, morphological and syntactic levels and ordinarily viewed the spoken language as primary.

Sociolinguists, on the other hand, attempted to answer the question: Who speaks what language to whom and why? This emphasis on spoken interaction defined the scope of most studies. With the exception of Fishman's classic study *Language Loyalty in the United States* (1966), in which he documented the existence of ethnic language newspapers and presses in this country, few individuals sought to describe language maintenance among bilinguals by focusing on their ability to read and write the ethnic language.

Biliteracy was also of little interest to psycholinguists. These researchers were typically interested in how bilingual individuals processed information using two language systems rather than in the modality (written or oral) of the information. For example, experiments carried out with bilinguals assumed the presence of biliterate skills and often used single words flashed on a screen as stimuli (e.g., Lambert, 1955). Conclusions, however, about bilingual dominance based on experiments using the written mode assumed that processing the written language did not differ in important ways from processing the oral language.

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[4] Two languages are said by Weinreich (1974) to be "in contact" when they are used alternately by the same speakers. More recently, Appel and Muysken (1986) have broadened this definition. According to these researchers, two languages are in contact when through force of circumstances, speakers of one language must interact with speakers of another in the course of their everyday lives.

[5] In theory, for each of his or her two languages, a bilingual individual could develop productive control (the ability to speak) and receptive control (the ability to understand) of the spoken language. He or she could also develop both productive control (the ability to write) and receptive control (the ability to read) of the written language.

[6] For example, in some cases, individuals who have become bilingual have been speakers of languages that have no written form. This was the case with most groups of Native Americans in this country. In other instances, conquering groups have imposed the use of the conquering language for all official written interaction and have discouraged the use of other written languages. In still other instances, people who have moved from one country to another have had little access to written materials in their first language. Moreover, they have been schooled only in the societal language of the new country. Because such conditions and others like them were generally present in most language contact situations, many scholars who studied a particular bilingual society took for granted the fact that, given the limitations of access, biliteracy would not be likely to be highly developed. They did not spend much time describing or documenting the results of these limitations in the productive or receptive written language skills of bilinguals.

An interest in biliteracy in conjunction with bilingualism has been recent. In general, this research and pedagogical focus stems from an expanding concern about the education of linguistic minorities all over the world. Existing work, therefore, on the development of productive and receptive abilities in the written language in each of a bilingual's two languages has been carried out by researchers of different disciplinary backgrounds in an attempt to determine how best to educate children who are not speakers of a societal language. The principal question for these researchers has involved the choice of the language in which children should first be taught to read. Much of this research has led to the conclusion that early instruction through the mother tongue results in greater gains in reading achievement in the societal language.[7] In the United States, these conclusions have been the subject of intense debate.[8] For the most part, however, regardless of the researcher's preference with respect to language choice, work on biliteracy has focused on young children in the early stages of acquiring a second language. In addition, this research has most often focused on the development of reading skills. With few exceptions (e.g., Ammon, 1985; Edelsky, 1982, 1983, 1986; Hudelson, 1981), researchers have only recently begun to examine the development of abilities related to the production of written language by bilingual children.

In spite of its limitations, research conducted in response to the problems faced by children who do not speak the language of the schools has led to important theoretical contributions. The work carried out by Cummins (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1981), for example, suggests that literacy skills acquired in one of a bilingual's two languages transfer successfully to the other language. According to Cummins, if the first language of a bilingual is well established, literacy skills developed in this language will transfer easily to the second language. Conversely, if skills are not developed in the first language, acquiring academic-level reading and writing skills in their second language will be difficult for many bilingual children.

In sum, research conducted on the nature of bilingualism has mainly concentrated on the study of the oral mode. Even though some attention has more recently been given to the examination of biliterate abilities among bilinguals by linguists, sociolinguists, and psycholinguists (e.g., McLaughlin, 1987; Segalowitz,1986), we do not have available a body of research about the role, function, and development of these abilities in bilingual societies. Attempts to summarize and review current knowledge relating to literacy and bilingualism tend, unfortunately, to be based on a superficial and incomplete understanding of the nature of bilingualism. As the following section will make clear, the greater part of the research currently being carried out has focused on the development of productive and receptive abilities in the written mode in a very distinct type of bilingual individual.

Bilingual Individuals: Elective versus Circumstantial Bilingualism

Although no universal agreement exists about what key categories or dimensions should be used in the description of bilingualism, most researchers have divided bilinguals into two fundamental categories: elective bilinguals and circumstantial bilinguals.[9]

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[7] This research includes work carried out in many different countries around the world. A good review of some of this work and these findings is contained in Dutcher (1982).

[8] For an overview of this debate, see Cazden and Snow (1990), Crawford (1989), Hakuta (1986), and Imhoff (1990).

[9] The terms *elective bilingualism* and *circumstantial bilingualism* were proposed in Valdés and Figueroa (in press) instead of the terms *natural* and *elite/academic bilingualism* that have been used by others (e.g, Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Paulston, 1977).

Elective bilinguals are individuals who choose to become bilingual, who seek out either formal classes or contexts in which they can acquire a foreign language (i.e., a language not spoken ordinarily in the communities in which they live and work), and who continue to spend the greater part of their time in a society in which their first language is the majority or societal language. The bilingualism of such elective bilinguals has also been referred to as "additive bilingualism" because these individuals are in a position of adding another language to their overall linguistic competence in a context in which their first language still remains the language of greater prestige and dominant usage.

Monolingual English-speaking Americans who learn French in foreign language classes, for example, are elective bilinguals. They remain bilingual by choice even when they travel to French-speaking countries in order to perfect their French. In contrast with circumstantial bilinguals, elective bilinguals put themselves in "foreign" settings for the principal purpose of expanding their language ability. They generally do not intend to live in the foreign country permanently and thus have no "real" need to use their new language in order to survive.

Students from other countries who study English in school and who then come to this country for advanced study are also elective bilinguals. For the most part, they intend to return to their counties to practice their chosen profession and are in the United States only to obtain an education. Many of these foreign students are members of the upper and middle classes and have been educated well in their first language. They have elected to learn and use English in order to further their position in their countries upon their return.

Circumstantial bilinguals, on the other hand, are individuals who, because of their circumstances, find that they must learn another language in order to survive. As Haugen (1972, p. 310) put it, they are individuals whose first language does not suffice to carry out all of their communicative needs. Because of the movement of peoples and/or because of changes in political circumstances (e.g., immigration, conquest, shifting of borders, establishment of post-colonial states), these individuals find themselves in a context in which their ethnic language is not the majority, prestige, or national language. In order to participate economically and politically in the society of which they are a part, therefore, such persons must acquire some degree of proficiency in the societal language.

Circumstantial bilingualism has sometimes been referred to as subtractive bilingualism because the condition of adding the societal language as a second language frequently leads to a loss of the first language. Because of the strong pressures exerted by the majority society and the lack of prestige of the original language, for these individuals, the condition of bilingualism is a temporary one that often results in the gradual abandonment of L1 (first language learned or acquired).[10]

Bilingual American minorities are, by definition, circumstantial bilinguals. They are forced by circumstances to acquire English, and they do so in a context in which their own first languages are accorded little or no prestige by the larger society. Whether they acquire English in formal settings (i.e., in voluntary ESL classes) or in natural interactions

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[10] The abandonment or retainment of the first language by circumstantial bilinguals is much more complex than I have outlined here. Numerous factors such as geographical proximity of the original sending community, large number of speakers, ethnic identity, literacy, and emotional attachment to the first language contribute to language maintenance. Other factors such as small number of speakers, high social and economic mobility in the majority society, and denial of ethnic identity contribute to language shift. For a listing of these factors, see Conklin and Lourie (1983, pp. 174-175) and Grosjean (1982, p. 107). An overview of the theoretical perspectives guiding research in the area of language shift and maintenance in bilingual societies is found in Fishman (1964).

with English speakers, they are fundamentally different from elective bilinguals, that is, from persons who study foreign languages strictly by choice. While immigrant bilinguals have a choice of not acquiring English, the consequences of their not doing so have far more direct impact on their daily lives than do decisions made by elective bilinguals when they elect to learn or not to learn a second language.

The fundamental difference between elective and circumstantial bilinguals has to do, then, not just with conditions in which languages are acquired, but also with the relationship between groups of individuals. Elective bilinguals become bilingual as individuals. The groups to which they belong have little to do with their decision to become speakers of another language. Circumstantial bilinguals, on the other hand, are generally members of a group of individuals who as a group must become bilingual in order to participate in the society that surrounds them.[11]

The principal characteristics of these two types of bilingualism are summarized in Table 1.

Types of Bilingual Individuals and Bilingual Communities

Because of the complexity of circumstantial bilingualism, one cannot easily classify bilingual individuals using one or two key variables such as "first language learned" or "language spoken in the home" as criteria. Individual circumstantial bilingualism can only be understood within the framework of societal bilingualism, that is, by taking into account the place and function of the two languages in question in the lives of particular groups of bilingual individuals who primarily share with each other the fact that they are not monolingual. The specific experiences of different individuals in using one or the other of their two languages will have a direct impact on the development of their functional ability in each language as well as their linguistic competence in both languages. Factors such as the arrival and presence of new immigrants, the background of these persons (e.g., education, social class), existing attitudes of established members of the community toward these immigrants, and the opportunities for revitalizing the ethnic language play a large role in the retention or loss of this language by individual speakers. Elements such as the presence of other immigrant groups in the same community and the perceived need to use the societal language as a lingua franca will also influence significantly the degree to which community members use this language frequently. The language used for religious practice, for carrying out business transactions, for entertainment (e.g., availability of movies and television in immigrant languages) will also affect the rate of acquisition of the societal language as well as the maintenance of the ethnic language.[12]

Many of these same elements and other similar factors may be present repeatedly in the community at different times. Particular bilinguals will be affected by these factors to a greater or lesser degree depending on their individual circumstances. Thus, one individual

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[11] It is important to note that the categories *elective bilingual* versus *circumstantial bilingual*, while helpful, are not always mutually exclusive. For example, an individual whose circumstances demand that he or she acquire a second a language may choose or elect to study this language in a formal setting. Similarly, an elective bilingual may decide to reside permanently in a setting wherein he or she is "forced" by circumstances to acquire levels of language not within the school-developed range. These distinctions, however, are useful for differentiating between two very different circumstances under which individuals initially come into contact with a language other than their first.

[12] For a review of the very large number of studies that have established the claims made here, see Chapter 2 of Romaine (1989) and Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Hamers and Blanc (1989).

Table 1
Elective versus Circumstantial Bilingualism

Elective Bilingualism	Circumstantial Bilingualism
1. Elective bilingualism is characteristic of individuals.	1. Circumstantial bilingualism is generally characteristic of groups of people.
2. Individuals choose to learn a non-societal language and create conditions (e.g., enrolling in language classes) that help bring such learning about.	2. Group members respond to circumstances created by movement of peoples, conquest, colonization, immigration, and the like. A second language is learned because the first language does not suffice to meet all of the group's communicative needs.
3. Communicative opportunities are artificially created in a classroom setting or sought specifically by learners. Some individuals may seek greater integration with the target language community. Such efforts are initiated by the language learner and may include marriage, residence abroad, etc.	3. Communicative needs may relate to either survival (minimal contact with the majority society) or success (ability to function totally in the majority society). Not everyone in the community will have the same communicative needs.
4. In the U.S., elective bilinguals are generally middle class. Occasionally, working-class students are also successful in foreign language classes. Working-class bilinguals who acquire a second language in schools or neighborhoods because they frequently interact with recent immigrant populations are also encountered.	4. In the U.S., circumstantial bilinguals include both indigenous groups (American Indians) and immigrant groups. Among immigrant groups, there may be individuals of different class backgrounds depending on the characteristics and history of the original group. The Vietnamese group in the U.S., for example, includes persons from urban upper-class backgrounds as well as persons of peasant background.
5. In the U.S., foreign students who come here to study from overseas are elective bilinguals. Children raised in families where two languages are spoken may be considered elective bilinguals if the circumstances requiring the use of two languages are created deliberately by the parents and are not present in the surrounding societal context outside of the home.	5. Circumstantial bilinguals include immigrants and original residents of territories conquered or colonized. Children raised in families where two languages are spoken are considered circumstantial bilinguals if the circumstances requiring the use of two languages also exist outside of the home.
6. For most elective bilinguals who study or use a second language for limited periods of time, their first language will remain their stronger language.	6. Circumstantial bilinguals will, over time, become stable bilinguals whose two languages play complementary roles in their every day lives. For most domains, topics, and styles, circumstantial bilinguals (even those whose two languages are very strong) will have a momentarily stronger language. This momentarily stronger or preferred language (Dodson, 1985) is one in which an individual feels a greater facility or capacity for efficient communication given the specific topic, speakers, and function in question.

might be affected by the presence of new immigrants in adolescence, be involved in activities that only require English during his or her twenties, and later marry (for the second time) a newly arrived immigrant from the home country. These different factors, then, will be reflected in the relative frequency with which he or she uses each of the two languages over the course of his or her life and the facility that he or she develops to discuss specific topics in each language.

More important, however, at any given moment, this same bilingual will reflect a sense of greater functional ease (not necessarily an awareness of such an ease) in one or the other of his or her languages, depending on his or her experience in similar contexts, with similar speakers, with similar topics or similar functions. Indeed, some researchers (Dodson, 1985) have suggested that for any given interaction or function, all bilinguals have a momentarily stronger language. Whether it is possible for them to choose to function in that "stronger" language for that particular interaction depends on the circumstances in which they find themselves.

Individual bilingualism that results from real use of and experience with two languages is highly complex and variable. While at the macro-level, one may be able to generalize about group tendencies or experiences, at the micro-level, one cannot make assumptions about the relative strengths and proficiencies of a bilingual's two languages based on one or two factors about his or her background and experiences. Factors such as language spoken in the home, age of arrival in the U.S., first language spoken, and even language used most frequently can predict little about a bilingual's relative strengths in each language. Two bilinguals, for example, who share each of the above characteristics may, nevertheless, have had experiences and contacts that resulted in very different strengths and weaknesses (e.g., strategic proficiency, linguistic proficiency, lexical range) in each of their languages.

In the United States, circumstantial bilingualism is generally the product of language contact that comes about as a result of immigration. However, this type of bilingualism also developed when territories (e.g., tribal lands inhabited by Native Americans, former Mexican territories such as the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California) were taken over by English-speaking populations. Most American circumstantial bilinguals, therefore, acquire their two languages within the context of a minority or immigrant community of which they are a part. Both the nature and the type of language proficiency that individuals acquire and develop in these communities depend on such factors as generational level, age, occupation, opportunity for contact with speakers of English, and exposure to English media.

The acquisition of English by new immigrants depends both on the nature of the community in which they settle and on the amount of exposure they have to English in their everyday lives. First generation immigrants, for example, can become quite fluent in English after a brief period of residence in this country, especially if they have had previous exposure to the formal study of English before emigrating to the United States. It is also possible that, depending on their place of residence and the number of bilinguals and monolinguals they interact with, they will fluctuate in their control and comfort in using the new language over the course of their lives. For most first generation bilinguals who arrive in this country as adults, however, the immigrant language remains dominant.

This is not necessarily the case for second generation immigrants. Ordinarily, English exerts a strong pressure involving both prestige within the immigrant community and access to the wider community's rewards. Generally, by the end of their school years, second generation immigrants develop a greater functional ease in English for dealing with most contexts and domains outside of the home and immediate community. Once again, there can be many differences between individuals of the same generation. Both the retention of the immigrant language and the acquisition of English depend on the opportunities available for use. In diglossic communities,[13] these individuals will have

[13] According to Fishman (1972), diglossic communities are those in which one language or one variety of language is used for all formal (high) functions (e.g., interacting with official agencies, the presentation of formal speeches, the education of children, etc.) and the other language or variety is used for all informal

little access to a full repertoire of styles and levels of language. Because the immigrant language tends to become a language of intimacy and informality, their competence in this language may soon be outdistanced by their competence in English.

This same phenomenon, i.e., the outdistancing of the immigrant language by English, is also observed in the area of literacy. By the end of the school years (even when the first three may have been supported by mother-tongue teaching), most immigrant bilinguals will have developed what skills they have in both reading and writing primarily in English. Pressures from the wider society, lack of opportunities for using the written immigrant language, and the limited availability of reading materials in these languages result in English language literacy rather than in a bilingual and biliterate profile.

The same generalizations made about first and second generation bilinguals can be made for third and fourth generation bilinguals. As in the case of second generation bilinguals, much variation occurs within generations, and this variation depends on the access to both English and the immigrant language. Numerous factors can influence both immigrant language retention and immigrant language loss for different individuals. According to Fishman (1964), it is generally the case, however, that by the fourth generation, immigrants become monolingual in English, the language of the majority society.

Incipient Circumstantial Bilingualism versus Functional Circumstantial Bilingualism[14]

Except for simultaneous bilinguals, that is, individuals who acquire two languages as a "first" language, most American circumstantial bilinguals acquire their ethnic or immigrant language first and then acquire English, this country's majority or societal language. The period of acquisition of the second language is known as incipient bilingualism.

As Figure 2 indicates, for different individuals, the period of incipient bilingualism varies, but it is normally followed by stages of stable functional bilingualism, that is, by stages at which these individuals can interact effectively with native speakers of the second language in order to carry out a broad range of communicative activities.

The length of the period of incipient bilingualism appears to depend on a number of factors, such as age at time of first exposure to the second language, amount of exposure to the second language, attitudes toward the second language, and individual personality characteristics. An individual, for example, who lives in a bilingual community but has no access to monolingual speakers of the majority language or few opportunities to hear

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(low) functions. In American immigrant communities, it is generally the case that English is considered appropriate for formal exchanges (political rallies, business meetings, announcements, sermons, and lectures) and the immigrant language is used within the home and community. As a result, U.S. born persons of immigrant background will seldom have the opportunity to hear the immigrant language used for the high or formal functions. Thus (except for radio and television where available in immigrant languages) they will have no models for this register of language and will not develop this level of language.

[14] As opposed to the use of the term *functional* in the study of literacy, within the field of bilingualism, the term has no negative connotations. A functional bilingual is considered to be not a minimally competent bilingual but an individual who can function, that is, actually use his or her language in real-life interaction.

Bilingual 1 Adult learner Good access to L2 speakers	**Incipient Stage** 4 years	**Functional Stage** Remains L1 preferrent in all domains. Can function in L2 in most contexts and domains.
Bilingual 2 Child learner	**Incipient Stage** 2 years	**Functional Stage** Becomes L2 preferrent in all domains. Avoids using L1. L1 features still reflected in L2 production.
Bilingual 3 Adult learner Limited or sporadic access to L2	**Incipient Stage/Limited Functional Stage** 10 years Remains L1 preferrent. Interacts primarily with monolingual speakers of L1 or with bilingual speakers.	

Figure 2. Stages of incipient and functional bilingualism.

English will logically go through a very long period of incipient bilingualism and may indeed never arrive at a period of stable functional bilingualism.[15]

The characteristics of functional bilingualism also vary. For a given bilingual, this stage may be characterized by the ability to use a very broad range of styles and levels in both languages, including the second language, or it may be restricted to a set of very limited communicative and/or linguistic abilities in the second language. What is clear, however, is that the English of very few of these bilinguals will be identical to the English of English-speaking monolinguals. Their non-native origins may be evident at a number of different levels. Nevertheless, the important point here is that no matter how many features remain that are non-native-like, there is a point at which an individual must be classified as a functional bilingual rather than as an incipient bilingual.

If one takes the view that incipient bilinguals are the responsibility of ESL programs and that functional bilinguals are beyond such instruction, the focus of the English composition teaching profession changes as in Figure 3. In this figure, the "mainstream" student population now includes a large number of functional bilinguals. These individuals are outside the formal ESL compartment and have spilled over into the realm of mainstream instructors. As will be noted, some bilingual students will be considered basic writers. The non-native quality of their writing will be interpreted as signaling inexperience with writing. Other bilingual students will be seen to have problems in their mastery of standard English and will be placed in the compartment dedicated to helping non-standard speakers to write in mainstream English. Still others will simply be placed among regular composition students. Ideally, as should be the case with bidialectal students who have already mastered the standard dialect, functional bilingual students would simply be seen as part of the mainstream population. Their particular problems and needs would be well known to all composition instructors.

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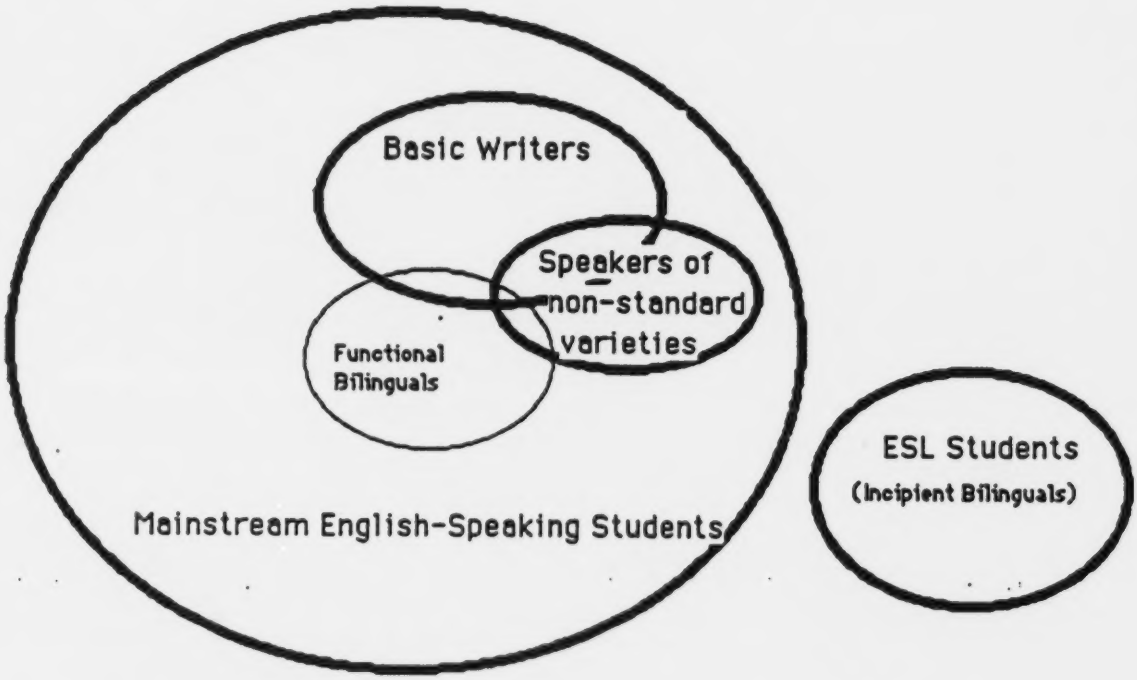
[15] The terms *mature bilingualism* and *steady-state bilingualism* have also been proposed by Hyltenstam and Obler (1989) to distinguish between the period in which individuals are becoming bilingual and the period when individuals can be considered to have acquired their second language.



* These diagrams are illustrative only. The exact size of the populations in question has not been established.

Figure 3. The place of incipient and functional bilinguals within existing compartments.

Currently, however, the mainstream profession is not structured to address the needs of "diverse" learners outside the compartments designated for them. Ordinarily instructors of "regular" composition classes will have some knowledge about the language characteristics of non-mainstream English speakers but will have little background on the topic of language differences associated with bilingualism. They have not been trained to evaluate the writing of non-English-background students and to determine what kinds of instruction they need.

ESL versus Mainstream: Who Belongs Where?

The question of how long an individual can be considered a "language learner," placed in the ESL compartment, and seen as an incipient bilingual is a complex one. While most scholars in the field of second language acquisition agree that second language learning is not identical to first language learning and that the key difference is the fact that a second language is generally not acquired "perfectly," scholars have not yet developed criteria for evaluating when a given individual can be considered to have passed from the incipient or learning stage of bilingualism to the fully developed stage.

A number of students of language acquisition hold that in a *first* language, language learning continues throughout a lifetime and that for *second* language learning, conditions are similar. In this sense, then, bilingual individuals as well as monolingual individuals would be considered language learners beyond the point at which they have acquired all or most of the linguistic structures of the language. They would be considered to continue to learn language as they become more educated, acquire a range of speaking and writing styles, and add to their vocabulary, for example.

I, however, would argue that in trying to establish how long non-native speakers of a language can be considered "learners" or "acquirers" of essential competencies or proficiencies of a target language,[16] comparisons with native speakers are not useful. Research has shown that not all second language learners continue to learn or acquire the various different kinds of competencies until they reach native-like abilities. For reasons not clearly understood, even though most functional bilinguals can achieve native-like control of many levels of a second language, they will still continue to use learner-like features of the language in certain expressions. The use of such learner-like features in bilinguals is known as *fossilization*. "Fossils" (non-native-like features) appear to remain in these individuals' second language production even after many years of constant exposure to and use of a second language and often in spite of direct instruction designed to eradicate these features. Fossilization may occur at the phonological, morphological, syntactic, discourse, and pragmatic levels.

To complicate matters further, highly bilingual and even monolingual speakers from a given ethnic group will speak what is called a *contact variety of English*. These individuals have learned English in communities from speakers of "imperfect" English who were themselves functional bilinguals. This imperfect English containing non-native-like features over time can become part of the variety of English spoken in the bilingual community. It is this variety that is acquired even by children who are raised as monolingual speakers of the language. For example, in Mexican American communities, monolingual speakers of English often speak a Spanish-influenced variety of English that is characterized particularly by the use certain non-English-like phonological features. Metcalf (1979, p. 1) referred to the English spoken in such communities as *Chicano English* and argued that it is spoken not by learners of the language but by "people whose native language is a special variety of English with a Spanish sound to it."

The result of the existence of different varieties of immigrant-language-influenced English is that, when teachers see, for example, a piece of writing produced by a student whose first language is not English, it is difficult for them to determine whether non-native-like features present in the writing are the result of incipient bilingualism (learning still formally in progress), the result of functional bilingualism containing many fossilized elements, or characteristic of a contact variety of English.

The distinction is important for teachers of composition because in the first case if the student is an incipient bilingual, he or she could be assigned once again to the ESL specialist. But if the student is a stable, functional bilingual, it is doubtful that direct instruction in English morphology or syntax will result in the elimination of these "foreign" or non-native-like features.

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[16] A number of researchers, e.g., Canale and Swain (1980), have suggested that these proficiencies or competencies include linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence. More recently, Bachman (1990) has proposed an even more complex model of communicative language ability.

Diagnosis	Evidence	Conclusion	Solution	Instruction
Diagnosis 1: Student is an incipient bilingual.	English is non-native-like. Many grammatical "errors" present.	Student is a learner of English.	Send to ESL.	A. English grammar. B. Mechanics.
Diagnosis 2: Student is a type 1 functional bilingual.	Produces L1-influenced English. "Errors" are systematic but different across students.	Student is a functional bilingual. Production includes "fossilized" elements.	Treat as mainstream.	A. Practice in editing own writing. B. Instruction in identifying "fossilized" usages.
Diagnosis 3: Student is a type 2 functional bilingual or student is a monolingual speaker of a contact variety of English.	Produces L1-influenced English. "Errors" are systematic and similar across students.	Student is a functional bilingual. He or she is (also) a speaker of a contact variety of English.	Treat as speaker of non-standard variety of English.	A. Compare characteristics of contact variety with standard written English. B. Instruction in correcting non-standard features.

Figure 4. Non-native-like writing: possible diagnoses and solutions.

To date, because of the lack of information available about the nature of bilingualism within the field of mainstream English-language writing, many instructors expect that once the ESL or incipient stage of language learning is completed, non-English-background students will be able to write very much like native speakers of English. Because they are now technically outside the ESL compartment, mainstream standards are applied, and, not surprisingly, many such students fail to meet these standards.

If the instructor is tolerant, if he or she is committed to valuing both content and form, functional bilinguals will not suffer. They will not be penalized for not being native speakers. If the instructor is not tolerant however, or if he or she has no knowledge about the nature of bilingualism, students are likely to receive low grades or to be sent back to the ESL compartment to classes and instruction that in terms of the development of their English language proficiency can no longer do anything for them. The problem is illustrated in Figure 4. As Figure 4 demonstrates, the very same evidence, that is, the obvious non-native quality of students' written production, may lead both practitioners and researchers to very different conclusions. Differences in production between different types of functional bilinguals are subtle, and pedagogical approaches as well as theories about composition pedagogy for these students are non-existent.

In order to illustrate this point, let us examine two samples of compositions produced by individuals who were technically beyond the ESL stage.

Sample 1

(Korean speaker, 18 years old, six years' residence in New York City, English medium of instruction in high school):

I haven't much thoughts about plans for weekend. On Saturday I'd work. Have a part-time job at the Bronx doing salesman and manager at a Wine and Liquor store. I can't make any plans on the Saturday, except working.

On Sunday I always go to a church and I spend time all day at the church. But not this weekend because I have a very important exam is coming up next week. So I'd stay home do my study. No matter what happens tomorrow, I'd not miss the baseball game. This Sunday there is the National League Championships finals. Also I'm big fan of the footballs. Anyway good luck to both teams. I'm very excited about it. I hope if I could do well on the exam.

Sample 2

(Spanish speaker, six years' residence in the United States, Writing Assessment Test Score 6):

I agree with the idea that women are working more today for the good of them and for the economy, but it is not good for the children of working mothers.

From my experience it is clear that mothers with children can't work, because children will suffer and they will feel isolated and abandoned. A mother should provide to her children love, care protection, and time, but if she is a working mother, she won't have time to provide her kids all those mention above. For example, my mother placed my little brother in a Day Care Center to go to work. My brother was being taking care fine for the two first week, but a month later he got sick. He had some kind of disease on his stamach, the doctor said that he was not getting the right amount of food per day. Either he was eating too much or not enough. After he was released from the hospital, my mother took care of him, he started to do fine.

From my observation of others, I believe that mothers should stay home. They should not go out to work for the good of their own children.

For example, my cousin has 3 beautiful daughters. They are in a school few blocks away from their house. They ages are six, seven and eight. One day she was tired of being indoor all of the time. She decided to get a job. She found a job. The three little girls were taking care of themselves. The oldest one used to supervise the younger. But one day when they were open their apartment door, a man who was coming upstairs saw those three little girls. He got into the apartment with them. He raped them, and he robbed all of what he could from the apartment. When my cousin came from work, she saw what haf happen she almost died.

In conclusion, mothers should be more aware of their children. If they decided to go to work they should get a good babysitter; otherwise, they should stay home taking care of their children. Children are the future men, so they need care, time, love and security. If you are mother please don't go out to work. Stay with your children. They need you more than anything else.

Both of the above samples have been taken from the work carried out by Yorio (1989) who, in his study of idiomaticity and second-language writing, found that, even after five to six years of residence in this country, having exited from ESL classes and having used English as a sole medium of instruction, non-native speakers still had problems producing writing that displayed native-like selection.

As these samples illustrate, Yorio's writers failed to produce conventionalized language consistently, that is, language that was genuinely idiomatic. Contrary to what is generally believed to happen with young children, according to Yorio, older learners appear not to learn prefabricated routines or idioms easily. As will also be appreciated in these samples, this writing is characterized by what Yorio terms a "non-phonological 'accent.'" Of this accent, he writes:

> Idiomaticity is a non-phonological "accent," not always attributable to surface language errors, but to a certain undefined quality which many frustrated composition teachers define as "I don't know what's wrong with this, but we just don't say that in English."

Exemplars of this "accent" can be found in both Sample 1 and Sample 2. Sample 1, for example, has a definite non-English flavor in spite of the fact that the author displays a familiarity with spoken American English. In addition to a peculiar use of tense, the sample includes many idioms that are almost, but not quite, genuine. The idiom, for example, *I haven't given much thought to* becomes *I haven't much thoughts about.* The idiom *I would like it if I could do well* becomes *I hope if I could do well.*

Sample 2, while much more sophisticated in both organization and form, also reflects the same type of non-phonological accent. It is again the idioms, the prefabricated phrases and routines, that appear to be just slightly off. The idiom *for their own good* becomes *for the good of them.* The idiom *was being taken care of fine* becomes *was being taking care fine.* In this sample, in particular, the writer appears to have a strong control of English grammar. His or her "errors" are limited to those phrases that Yorio considers to be conventionalized and preformulated.

Unfortunately, as Yorio himself admitted, such conventionalized or preformulated idiomaticity is hard to define or describe. Nevertheless, following Pawley and Syder (1983), Yorio defined native-like selection as "the ability of the native speaker routinely to convey his meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also native-like" (p. 19). Native-like fluency, on the other hand, is "a native speaker's ability to produce fluent stretches of spontaneous connected discourse." Native-like selection requires that an individual choose from among a number of grammatical and correct paraphrases, elements that are both natural and idiomatic.

What this suggests for researchers and practitioners in the field of composition is that the learning of automatic and conventional phrases, of collocations, and of idiomaticity is complex. Even bilinguals who are native-like in their fluency may be most unnative-like in their selection and in their use of conventionalized language. Problems of selection or idiomaticity are particularly salient in written language.

From my own study of the writing of non-native writers,[17] I would maintain that it is problems of this nature that most affect functional bilinguals enrolled in classes with native speakers. A great deal of the writing produced by such bilinguals appears to be

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[17] My work on non-native writers has been carried out primarily in the development of text materials for Spanish language majors in foreign language departments. The texts produced as a result of fourteen years' experience in teaching advanced composition courses to both native and non-native Spanish-speaking students in the same classroom include *Composición: Proceso y síntesis* (Valdés, Hannum, & Dvorak, 1984; Valdés, Dvorak, & Hannum, 1989) and *Español escrito: Curso para hispanohablantes bilingües* (Valdés & Teschner, 1978, 1984). Recently, I have completed work (Valdés, Haro, & Echevarriarza, submitted for publication) on the development of writing proficiencies in English monolingual students at different levels of study of the Spanish language.

almost native-like. Certainly the basic grammatical rules have been acquired, yet it is also obvious that the non-native quality remains.

What should be done? Should such students be sent back to ESL? Will more instruction in English structure solve the problem? This solution may not be particularly effective. Indeed, I would argue that in the case of the writer of Sample 2, additional instruction in formal grammar and even in the totality of English language idioms would not result in more native-like production. The fact of the matter is that the writing of most or many functional bilinguals will be characterized by such a lack of total idiomatic control. In spite of much instruction at the ESL stage of their schooling and in spite of the efforts made by functional bilinguals to edit their own writing, their writing will not be indistinguishable from that native speakers.

The questions for professionals in the area of composition are many: How should mainstream teachers deal with such students? Should they view them as regular mainstream writers? Should they be viewed as basic writers? Should the same assumptions about sound pedagogical approaches made for mainstream writers inform the teaching of writing to bilingual students? How will functional bilinguals be affected by current popular practices, such as writing across the curriculum,[18] writing to learn, and the like? Will they be penalized for the non-native quality of their writing? And will they be penalized unfairly?

In the case of idiomaticity and selection, we can maintain that it is to date poorly understood and that it is only now beginning to be investigated by students of bilingualism. However, the point to be made is a larger one. Idiomaticity is only one example of the kind of difference between native and non-native English speakers that composition professionals may find impossible to interpret without background and training in the area of circumstantial functional bilingualism. This, in turn, also suggests that the English composition profession must begin to see itself as a profession that is seriously concerned with the deeper and more complex realities of diversity.

RESEARCH IN WRITING IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

In order to understand the problems confronted by functional bilinguals when writing in a second language, both practitioners and researchers must begin to examine current research and to identify directions and priorities for further study. The following overview is presented from this perspective.

Existing research on non-English-background writers has concentrated almost exclusively on ESL writers, that is, on students who are still enrolled in ESL programs. As might be expected, language-teaching professionals involved in the teaching of English in this country (ESL professionals) have been directly affected by the new writing emphasis. Students exiting from ESL courses are now being expected to write well in English and even to compete with their English monolingual peers using standards established for writing in English as a native language rather than a second language.

As a result of pressure felt by ESL professionals about the new demands placed on their students, much research has been carried out and continues to be carried out on second-language writing. This research includes work on such topics as business letter

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[18] Concern about such matters has recently been expressed by Elizabeth McPherson (1991, p. 87). McPherson worries that untrained teachers in history or horticulture may insist on a set of "misunderstood and arbitrary 'rules' that good writing teachers have long ago abandoned."

writing in English, French, and Japanese (Jenkins & Hinds, 1987); the revising and composing strategies of young children learning to write in English (Urzua, 1987); responses to student writing (Zamel, 1985); the composing processes of advanced ESL students (Zamel, 1983); cultural differences in the organization of academic texts (Clyne, 1987); the composing processes of unskilled ESL students (Jones, 1985; Raimes, 1985, 1987); writing development in young bilingual children (Edelsky, 1982, 1983, and 1986); the development of appropriate discourse organization (Mohan and Lo, 1985); the development of temporality in native and non-native speakers (McClure & Platt, 1988); invention preferences of advanced ESL writers (Liebman-Kleine, 1987); and the development of pragmatic accommodation (Stalker & Stalker, 1988). Recently, several collections of articles (e.g., Johnson & Roen, 1989; Kroll, 1990) have focused exclusively on the writing of ESL students.

Characteristics of the Research

In comparison to the work that has been carried out on the writing of American students whose first language is English, relatively little research has been carried out on writing in English as a second language. Moreover, because a number of fields are concerned about second language writers (e.g., the ESL teaching profession, the ESP [English for Special Purposes] teaching profession, the foreign language-teaching profession, and bilingual educators), research carried out within the traditions of these various sub-fields has remained compartmentalized and has failed to yield a coherent view of the development of writing skills in individuals who are in the process of acquiring a second language. These four fields have had even less to say about the development of writing skills in functional bilinguals who are beyond the incipient stages of bilingualism.

Consequently, even though some research on writing has been carried out from these different perspectives, until recently the tendency had been for this research to respond to immediate concerns within the particular subfield in question and in many cases either to ignore research carried out on the writing of mainstream students or to follow its models slavishly. A study of early research on writing that focused on Hispanic-background students (Valdés, 1989), for example, revealed that work on these bilingual students was largely concerned about negative interference between students' two languages. More important, however, the majority of the research conducted on these non-English-background students did not assess the actual language proficiency of the students in question. Students were grouped together and labeled "limited-English-speaking," "Spanish-surnamed," ESL students, but seldom were any attempts made to determine whether these individuals were indeed similar. The result of this tendency is that little information is available about the relationship between actual language proficiency and writing.

Even with these limitations, however, work carried out in the late seventies and early eighties addressed a number of key areas. What emerges from existing work is a growing sense that learning how to write in a second language may involve much more than simply learning how to avoid interference from the native language. Work carried out from a number of directions argues for a perspective on second language writing that takes into account what we know about basic and skilled writers who are native speakers of English, that attempts to understand in what ways second language writers are different from these native language writers, and that looks closely at the actual writing process of second language learners as they write.

Two examples of work that has examined the growth and progress of ESL writers in comparison to native-speaking writers are the studies carried out by Edelsky (1982, 1983, 1986) and by Mohan and Lo (1985). Specifically, the work carried out by Edelsky

documents ways in which young children use writing skills and perceptions about writing that they had already developed in their first language as they begin to write in English. This work suggests that, for children, some aspects of learning about writing conventions in English parallels some of the aspects encountered in the study of early writing in a first language. Work carried out by Mohan and Lo argues that rather than assuming that organizational "problems" in the writing of second language learners are due to interference or negative transfer, researchers should consider explanations that take into account how appropriate discourse organization grows and matures in native speakers.

Work in this direction is particularly important because it suggests that second language learners cannot be expected to grow in their writing abilities in English in ways that are very unlike the patterns of growth generally exhibited by native speakers of English. Even though exact stages and patterns of growth have not been described for native English language writers, work carried out on both basic and expert writers and writers and writing in general (e.g., the work analyzed and discussed by Hillocks, 1986) offers a good point of departure. For example, given what we know about the differences between basic writers and skilled writers, if L2 (second language learned or acquired) writers are young or basic writers in addition to being second language learners, they will probably progress somewhat along the lines that developing basic writers progress on their way to becoming good writers. One might expect, then, that the writing of second language learners might display a number of features typical of basic writers that have little or nothing to do with transfer from their first language.

Taking a developmental view has important implications for the analysis of the writing of second language learners. It implies, for example, that conclusions about first language transfer at the level of discourse for inexperienced writers may be more complex than early researchers in this area suggested. Even though the work carried out by Choi (1988), Clyne (1987), Hinds (1983, 1980), Jenkins and Hinds (1987), Kaplan (1966), and Matalene (1985) was valuable in suggesting that "accents" could exist at the discourse level, much more may be involved than simple cross-linguistic transfer. "Unexpected" discourse characteristics in the writing of beginning writers (those who have no experience writing in their first language) may not actually be discourse transfer, but simply the product of beginning writing development.

Obviously, a developmental perspective based on knowledge about mainstream writers makes an assumption about parallels to be found between first and second language writers. The expectation is that important similarities exist between the stages of writing growth and sophistication of young native-speaking writers of English and the those of English language learners who are learning to write in their second language. This expectation is shared by a number of researchers who have already examined this assumption and have sought to study it in a number of different ways. McClure and Platt (1988), for example, examined the development of temporality in written narratives in young native and non-native children and found that although the pattern of use of temporality was similar, non-native children exhibited a developmental lag. This study offered support for the view that there are similarities between native and non-native writers, even though the latter may lag behind the former.

Other researchers, while focusing less on sequences of growth, have also compared first and second language writers. Liebman-Kleine (1987) examined the invention preferences of advanced ESL students in order to discover how like or unlike native speakers they might be in these preferences. She concluded that, unlike native speakers, ESL students found systematic heuristics unsuccessful because these techniques depend to a large extent on linguistic abilities. Similarly, ESL students found open-ended exploratory writing only moderately helpful. Stressing the fact that words are not cheap for writers

who are writing in a second language, Liebman-Klein suggested a significant difference between first and second language writers: in the first case, writers have highly developed linguistic abilities in the language in which they are writing, but in the second case they do not.

Other comparisons of native and non-native speakers and their writing include a study of pragmatic accommodation (Stalker & Stalker, 1988), a study of orienting skills of native and non-natives (Scarcella, 1984), and a study of cohesion and coherence (Connor, 1984). Seen as a body, these studies suggest that there are both similarities and differences between natives and non-natives. Certain expected differences (e.g., cohesion density) were not found (Connor, 1984), but other differences (e.g., limited comparative ability to orient their readers) were indeed found (Scarcella, 1984). Even though one may conjecture that non-native writing abilities will develop following a sequence similar to that of native writers, the research on differences and similarities between these two groups of individuals suggests that limitations in linguistic ability cannot be overlooked.

Important insights about this question, that is, about the relationship between language limitations and writing, have been provided by the research carried out on the composing processes of second language learners (e.g., Jones, 1985; Raimes, 1985, 1987; Zamel, 1983). Zamel (1983), for example, found that advanced ESL students "attend to language-related concerns only after their ideas have been delineated" (p. 165). Similarly, unskilled ESL students in Raimes' study (1985) did not edit very often in the course of writing and could not be grouped neatly in their behaviors according to level of language proficiency. Raimes found few similarities between her subjects and the basic writers studied by Perl (1979). Finally, Jones (1985) found that the use of "the monitor" (conscious grammatical knowledge) as a filter or editor in writing did not lead to improved writing.

In sum, research on the composing process of non-native English language has focused primarily on students who can still be classified as incipient bilinguals. Moreover, many of the studies cited above have investigated the writing of elective and non-circumstantial bilinguals—foreign students who have been educated in their own countries and who have elected to enroll in American universities—rather than American bilingual minority students. Given the vast differences between the nature of these two groups' bilingual experience, it is unclear how much one can generalize from such studies to the study of bilinguals who have had very little access to education in their first language.

BREAKING OUT OF COMPARTMENTS: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Rethinking divisions within professional associations and breaking out of compartments is not a simple task for any group. For the English composition profession, in particular, restructuring its focus in order to make bilingual minority students a profession-wide concern for both researchers and practitioners will present many challenges. One of the first steps in facing these challenges must be the involvement of mainstream researchers in the study of the writing of fluent functional bilinguals. Without the involvement of mainstream researchers, without a profound interest by these individuals in the examination of issues they might once have considered to be "out of their fields of expertise," the study of diverse populations will continue to be considered the exclusive property of minority researchers or of a small number of specialists.

Even though research on writing on mainstream populations has increased greatly in the last several years, the same is not true about the research currently being carried out on the writing of minority populations. When such research is carried out, moreover, it is

often unrelated to current theories about writing and writing instruction. In this final section of the paper, I have included an outline of a number of research directions focusing on the writing of bilingual minority students. In compiling this outline, I have taken the position that research on bilingual minority writers must begin at the beginning; that is to say, it must begin by asking how and whether such bilingual students actually experience problems in writing. By limiting my assumptions, I hope to suggest that, to some degree, the writing of minority bilinguals must be studied independently of the writing of mainstream individuals. While a number of areas require comparisons between mainstream and minority students, the research on mainstream writers cannot serve as a point of departure for most of the research carried out on bilingual writers. Rather, such research must stem from an understanding of both bilingualism *and* writing.

The Writing of Bilingual Minority Students: Issues and Questions

An outline of issues dedicated to the examination of the writing of bilingual individuals in this country must include questions and directions of relevance to the study of the two different populations identified above: circumstantial bilinguals (minority group members who have acquired or are acquiring English) and elective bilinguals (majority group members [English speakers] who are studying or learning languages other than English as foreign languages). Although one could argue that the writing of both groups can be studied under the general heading of writing in a second language, the differences between the backgrounds of the two populations are so fundamental that a single agenda would either exclude a series of concerns relevant to the study of circumstantial bilinguals or include a variety of questions irrelevant to the study of elective bilingualism and writing.

The research directions presented here will be limited to the study of the writing of bilingual minority students in this country. Although much within this agenda can apply to bilingual individuals of many different types, I leave to others the task of developing an outline of research directions that addresses writing in a second language among majority group individuals. Specifically, this preliminary listing of research topics is organized to respond to four key questions.

1. What kinds of writing instruction are bilingual minority students generally exposed to?

2. In what ways is the writing of bilingual minority students treated as a problem by mainstream teachers?

3. What is the impact of language factors on the writing of incipient bilinguals and of fluent/functional bilinguals?

4. What is the influence of background factors on the writing of bilingual minority students?

In the remainder of this section, I will discuss each of these four questions and suggest a number of subquestions in each area.

1. What kinds of writing instruction are bilingual minority students generally exposed to?

Before we can determine whether problems experienced in writing by bilingual minority students occur because they are both bilingual and minority students, we must investigate the writing instruction that these students generally receive. In this paper, I have argued that the English composition field is divided into two main compartments.

What we do not know is what type of instruction bilingual minority students are generally exposed to in each compartment. Given the realities of ESL programs—which frequently are heavily grammar oriented—and the tendency for "low ability" students to be placed in remedial or basic skills classes, it is possible that bilingual students actually receive little instruction in writing. Descriptive research is needed that helps us understand what happens to these students at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. We need information about how fluent functional bilinguals who first enter college perform on writing placement tests, about what kinds of effects different methods of assessment have on different kinds of bilinguals, and on the relationship between previous writing instruction at the high school level and success in college. Before we can understand why students arrive at the college level with what appear to be limited writing abilities, we must study their high school experiences carefully. We must ascertain how much bilingual minority students write as compared with majority students who are both college and non-college-bound. We must discover when they begin to write, what they are expected to write, and how often they are required to write during the course of their school lives.

We must also investigate the quality of the instruction these students receive. For example, are the English teachers most concerned about and interested in writing normally assigned to the honors English classes, or do they principally teach in schools populated with middle- and upper-middle-class students? What happens in the lower tracks? What are the attitudes of these instructors toward their students? What are the general trends, across the country, at the elementary, junior high school, and high school levels for teaching writing to bilingual minority students as compared with the teaching of writing to majority, mainstream students? Are writing-across-the-curriculum models mainly implemented with mostly mainstream students labelled high-ability? How are the approaches used with the different groups similar? How are they different? And most important, can differences in instruction explain differences in outcomes?

Currently, little is known about whether process-oriented instruction has been used with these students, how successful it has been, and how it has been adapted to the bilingual capabilities of these individuals. We do not know whether approaches often advocated for use with mainstream students will be effective with the special category of students of interest. Research on how well process-oriented activities work must be carried out. We must determine, for example, how bilingual minority students of different language proficiencies profit from the use of such activities as brainstorming, free writing, peer response groups, and prewriting activities. We need to investigate what the best methods are to teach these students to plan, to set goals, and to think about the reader when writing.

Much work has been carried out in the area of instruction of majority students. One cannot assume, however, that methods and approaches that have been effective with this group will automatically be successful with students of very different backgrounds. Systematic research must be carried out in this area in order to identify effective and adaptable approaches.

2. In what ways is the writing of bilingual minority students treated as a problem?

Recent interest in writing has responded to a vocal national concern about students' writing skills and about the teaching of writing in American schools. In the public mind, the nation is in the midst of a "writing crisis," and much attention has been given to addressing the problems associated with that crisis. Given the concern about educating the increasingly diverse student population of this country, a large segment of the public also

believes that if mainstream middle-class students have problems writing, the problems faced by minority bilingual students must be even greater.

Even though researchers studying mainstream students have perhaps never seriously investigated the extent of the "writing crisis," it is important that research on the existence and the nature of the writing "problem" for bilingual minorities be carried out systematically. Minimally, we must investigate whether the writing of these students is actually a problem or whether it is simply treated as a problem by researchers and practitioners. Of the total articles and research reports that I recently examined on the writing of one of the large bilingual minority groups in this country,[19] I found only a few articles (e.g. Ford, 1984; Merrill, 1976; McArthur, 1981) that attempted to determine whether the writing of mainstream students and bilingual minority students is actually different, whether it is responded to differently by teachers and evaluators when ethnic identity is masked, and whether differences, if present, go beyond the surface level. Studies are needed in which the writing of mainstream students is compared to that of different types of bilinguals (e.g., fluent, English-dominant individuals; fluent, Spanish-dominant individuals; limited-English-speaking, Spanish-dominant bilinguals; and incipient bilinguals with and without previous writing experience in their own languages). Analyses of these writing products must go beyond the examination of errors and must include organizational features as well. Profiles and composites of the writing of different types of bilinguals based on these analyses must then be compiled.

Once solid descriptions or composite samples of the writing of both monolingual and bilingual students of different types are available, we must determine what features of each composite appear to affect its evaluation. Do mechanical errors of a specific type affect teachers and evaluators more than other errors? Are these errors perceived as more "foreign"? Is there a tendency for such "foreign" errors to blind evaluators to other aspects of the writing? Do similar features occur in the writing of bilingual students from different language backgrounds? Are responses the same or different if teachers are told that authors are members of one minority group as opposed to another? Are the same features considered salient for evaluating the writing of students from different backgrounds? Do teachers of other subjects respond in the same way as English teachers and teachers of composition?

Clearly the dimensions of the writing "problem" for bilingual minority students must be established. We cannot carry out research on its causes if the problem remains vague and undefined or if discussions of the nature of the difficulties or problems are based, not on real data, but on contrastive analyses of two systems. A fundamental task for researchers, then, will be to provide accurate descriptions of the writing of bilingual minority students *of different types* and to ascertain how this writing is evaluated (accepted or not accepted) by various individuals who may be in a position of making judgments about these students' writing.

We must carefully document the effects and consequences of the new emphasis on writing for bilingual minority students. We must determine, for example, if either perceived or actual difficulties in writing result in low grades. Are these grades lower than those obtained by majority students with similar writing problems? Do these problems result in tracking? Is writing used to place students in different classes? Is writing used to place students in homogeneous "ability" groups within the same class? Do these problems affect students' success in the use of writing outside of the school context? Do they fare

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[19] During the years 1986 to 1988, I conducted a project funded by the Center for the Study of Writing at UC Berkeley entitled "Identifying priorities in the study of Hispanic background students: A synthesis and interpretation of available research." The results of this work are reported in Valdés (1989).

well or poorly in classes in which essay examinations are required? Are they able to write college-admissions essays? Do poorly written essays affect their acceptance to college?

Clearly, in order to understand how significant the problem is, we must also investigate what effect the new writing emphasis has had and will have on students in general. We need to examine how what is seen as a lack of adequate writing skills in one environment affects students' success in the broader context of everyday living. This broader context includes other classes, other domains in which writing is used, and the real world of work and survival.

In the case of minority students, this information is particularly important. If, for example, research determines that a deficiency in writing skills correlates highly with low achievement and lack of vocational success for bilingual minority students, can it be concluded that improved writing abilities would change this pattern? Is it the case that the writing "problem" is separable from the rest of the academic and societal difficulties of these students?

As important as writing is, we must not lose sight of the fact that factors such as overagedness (perhaps caused by retention), ineffective schooling, segregated schooling, low socio-economic background, tracking and the like also have a significant impact on low achievement and college eligibility. Research is needed that allows us to determine if there are ways of breaking the cycle of failure for these students. Success in learning how to write, success in using writing for self-disclosure and for self-expression, success in communicating through writing how much is learned or understood in class, and success in being considered a "good writer" by teachers may indeed influence students' total school performance. It is important to investigate, however, whether the process or practice of writing itself contributes to students' success uniquely, or whether any other subject or area in which students experience success could be used with the same results.

The academic difficulties faced by bilingual minority students are many, and the causes of these general difficulties are complex and poorly understood. Even though a deficiency in writing skills may contribute to these difficulties, learning to write, by itself, will not change the reality that many of these students face on an everyday basis. Writing researchers must be aware that any research done on writing alone that is not directly grounded in the academic and personal experiences of the minority students in question will contribute little to our understanding of the actual value of writing for these students, of the other factors that influence their academic success, and of the approaches that could be taken to break long established patterns and expectations. Interesting as the theoretical questions relating to the writing of these students may be, educational researchers must not lose sight of the fact that practical solutions are desperately needed.

3. What is the impact of language factors on the writing of incipient and fluent/functional bilinguals?

Assuming that writing is a problem for bilingual minority students, that it is a serious problem and one much beyond that experienced by mainstream majority students, and assuming also that one could separate writing from the other academic problems encountered by minority students, the research priority would then be to examine the possible "causes" of the perceived problem.

Because one of the principal differences between mainstream students and bilingual minority students is that the latter are bilingual, the relationship among levels of language proficiency, types of bilingualism, and the development of writing ability need to be investigated. However, most studies conducted to date that address language factors and

writing in bilingual minority students have tended to focus on interference (negative language transfer) between the immigrant language and English. Few studies have investigated the process or the practice of writing as each relates to such areas as the nature of bilingualism, bilingual processing, or second language acquisition.

In spite of the fact that bilingual individuals differ in levels of language proficiency, range in each language, and functional ability in each language, most of studies that I reviewed for the project on the writing of Hispanics failed to measure the language competencies or proficiencies of the groups investigated. Bilingual groups were generally poorly chosen and described by researchers and included Spanish-surnamed students, students enrolled in bilingual education programs, or students enrolled in ESL, without regard to differences in proficiency and ability among individuals. I suspect that other bilingual groups have been treated similarly by researchers.

The research topics and questions to be listed and discussed next are dependent on the measurement and description of the language abilities and proficiencies of the students investigated. I must again emphasize that research on bilingual minority students that attempts to understand how language factors affect writing cannot be considered valid if the language abilities/proficiencies of these students are not measured or described in some detail.

For this discussion, circumstantial bilingual individuals have been divided into two large groups: incipient bilinguals (individuals who are in the process of acquiring a second language and who cannot yet be considered fully fluent in English) and fluent, functional bilinguals. As will be recalled from the discussion of bilingualism, both categories necessarily include a wide variety of individuals who possess different levels of proficiency in different language modes (i.e., in speaking, listening, reading and writing), and different strengths in each mode.

The writing of incipient bilinguals. The investigation of the writing of incipient bilinguals presents opportunities for researchers to study how skilled English language writing grows and develops in different groups of language learners depending upon their age, their background in writing in their original language, their levels of oral fluency in English, their exposure to written English models, and their exposure to writing instruction. Research on bilingual students of various ages whose backgrounds in reading and writing in their first language vary is critical, as is research on non-literate adults.

Research is needed, for example, on incipient bilinguals of various ages who have already acquired writing skills in their first language. This may include students in transitional bilingual education programs or students who have moved to this country after having attended school for one or more years in their own countries. For these individuals, we need to determine what their perceptions about writing are, what they believe the purposes of writing include, how they view the relationship between speech and writing, and what they consider to be "good" writing. Much has been said about the differences between the edited written register of a language and its spoken registers. What do individuals schooled in other countries know about this distinction? Can these bilinguals recognize the differences between spoken and written registers in English? Are they capable of using a spoken level of English that is similar to the written standard? If they are proficient only in the informal, casual, and intimate levels of English, what happens when they attempt to write academic prose? Do they tend to "think" in their first language? Do they automatically reproduce the rhetorical and syntactic properties of the edited written standard that they know well in their own language and then attempt to translate into English? We need to determine what the results of these attempts are. When is negative transfer from L1 more likely to occur? When negative transfer does occur, what are its

causes? Does it result from an insufficient familiarity with organizational conventions? with English spelling conventions, with English syntax? Does it result from an entirely different way of conceptualizing the task, or from the fact that the student is attempting to translate and is using L1 syntax and organization as a basis? What approaches can be developed to sort out these various possibilities? How aware are individual students of how they write and of the writing process itself?

To date, most research on incipient bilinguals schooled initially in their home language has taken the position that their writing will be contaminated by features of their L1. Instruction, then, is directed at getting them to avoid such contamination by either "thinking in English," editing their own writing using key grammar rules, or adapting writing models considered "good" writing for their own use. Very little attention has been given to what students bring with them, to the understandings they already have about the written language, to the skills they may have already developed, and to the ways in which they can be taught to use their first language strategically in learning to write in English.

The research questions outlined above, if pursued, would do much to establish important points of departure for teaching to learners' strengths and for critically examining all instructional approaches that presuppose little or no knowledge or awareness of writing on the part of these individuals.

The development of writing abilities should also be studied among non-literate, adult incipient bilinguals. In this particular case, studies can focus on how "naive" adults (as compared to children) uncover various aspects of the written language. These studies can help us understand how this process differs if the written language is L1 as opposed to L2, how the process differs if adults have been exposed to print previously, and how it differs if members of their immediate family (i.e. children, spouse) are also in the process of acquiring the English language and skills in reading and writing. In carrying out such research, the relationship between L2 development and its different stages and general characteristics must be taken into account.

The importance of this research, especially when compared with studies carried out on young incipient bilinguals, is that it can allow us to determine how age contributes or fails to contribute to both the process of acquiring a second language and the process of learning to write. It can also shed light on the impact of utility, the actual practical application of these abilities, on both the learning and the use of the written language.

In sum, the investigation of the writing of incipient bilinguals presents opportunities for researchers to study the relationship between the stages and levels of second language proficiency and the process of learning to write. Important comparisons can be made across stages of proficiency, age, background, previous exposure to the written language, and the like, that can contribute to our understanding of positive and negative language transfer, the use of L1 as a strategy in learning to write L2, the sequence of development of writing abilities in different types of incipient bilinguals, and the relationship between spoken language proficiency and control over the academic register in both its oral and written modes.

Questions investigating the writing of fluent/functional bilinguals. Contrary to the claims made often by such groups as English Only and US English, an increasingly large number of members of ethnic minority groups can be classified as

English-dominant.[20] Because of their exposure to English, some of these English-dominant bilinguals will be indistinguishable from their monolingual peers in every type of oral exchange. What is interesting for writing researchers is that, given these fluent bilinguals' control, command, and proficiency in English, it is not unlikely that in some cases the writing of such bilinguals would be equally indistinguishable from that produced by their same-age and background monolingual peers. Research on these kinds of cases would reveal much about the relationship between bilingualism and writing.

As in the case of incipient bilinguals, research on fluent/functional bilinguals must include the measurement and description of the language abilities and proficiencies of the students investigated. It must also include research on different types of bilinguals who differ in general background and exposure to writing. While specific research foci would differ, questions such as the following would make up the core of a research agenda on fluent/functional bilinguals: Are there "expert" bilingual writers? Assuming that there are expert bilingual writers, how do these writers go about the process of writing? Do they write in both of their languages? What is the same and what is different about the products they produce in different languages? What is the same and what is different in the processes used to compose in the two languages? What is the difference between expert monolingual writers and expert bilingual writers?

How do bilingual individuals actually go about writing? Are their strategies based on one language? On both languages? Do the strategies used differ in different kinds of bilinguals? How does exposure to the written language in L1 affect the process of writing for different types of bilinguals? What is the relationship between writing tasks and writing processes?

We need descriptions of the written products of fluent/functional bilinguals of various types, information about the qualities and features of products written for different purposes and under different conditions, and analyses of the relationship between writing tasks and writing products. We also need information about the approaches currently being used to assess the writing of bilingual students.

It may be bilingualism *per se* that causes problems for students, but it may also be that length of exposure to writing and writing conventions is more closely linked to writing difficulties. Perhaps a certain length of exposure to the written language in either L1 or L2 is required before any benefits are reflected in students' writing. Perhaps there are significant differences between students who learned to write in their second language before they learned to write in their native language and those who learned to write in L1 before writing in L2.

Understanding how the processes of revising and editing work for fluent bilinguals is essential. We need investigations of when and how these individuals revise their drafts, how L1 and L2 are used in revising and/or editing by different types of bilinguals, and how grammatical rules are used in both of these processes. And, in the light of instructional approaches that emphasize writing to learn, we also need studies of the connections between writing and learning for different types of bilinguals. In what ways does writing improve learning for bilingual students? What kinds of writing have what kinds of effects? In what ways and at what levels of proficiency does writing frustrate or interfere with student learning?

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[20] For discussion of the growing English dominance among immigrant groups, see Veltman (1983). An excellent overview of the increasing English monolingualism among the largest of the bilingual minority groups, the Hispanics, is found in Solé (1990).

As the list of questions above has undoubtedly made clear, in order to be complete, research on the writing of fluent/functional bilinguals must encompass the investigation of questions that have already been examined in monolingual writers. The question of whether the language factor is a cause of the "problems" experienced by bilingual minority students can be understood only if it is studied in both incipient and fluent bilinguals of as many different types as possible and compared with what is currently known about writing "problems" of monolingual individuals.

In addition, however, the study of the writing of fluent/functional bilinguals can contribute to a more complete understanding of the nature of writing and the process of writing in general if researchers take the perspective that, as opposed to what is commonly believed, there are expert bilingual writers, writers who have learned how to capitalize on the strengths or their two languages and from whom much can be learned.

The question of how and whether language factors such as age of acquisition, degree of proficiency, and exposure to writing in L1 affect the ways in which students write, their attitudes toward writing, the sequence in which skilled writing develops, is a complex one. As the discussion of needed research has attempted to illustrate, the questions and issues to be considered go much beyond a superficial view of such frequently researched areas as first language interference. They go much beyond the study of student performance on specific writing tasks and require the careful description of the language characteristics of the students being investigated. I must emphasize that without such descriptions, what is being investigated cannot contribute to our understanding of how language factors actually affect the process of writing, writers themselves, and those evaluating the writing of such writers.

4. What is the influence of background factors on the writing of bilingual minority students?

In trying to identify the causes of the writing problems experienced by bilingual minority students, a number of researchers have suggested that background factors may also play a significant role in defining how these students approach writing in general. Among the documents I examined for my work on the writing of Hispanic bilinguals, for example, several studies (e.g., Galvan, 1985; Gonzalez, 1982; Rigg, 1985; Rodrigues, 1977; Seale, 1976; Shuman, 1983; Trevino, 1976; Trueba, 1987) took the position that students encounter difficulties in writing because what they are asked to do in the classroom is not relevant or connected to their cultural background or to their daily lives.

The possibility of attributing writing difficulties experienced by non-mainstream students to cultural and background factors is an attractive one. In many ways, it lets both students and instructors off the hook. If a student appears to be having problems writing persuasive essays, for example, it seems plausible to suggest that these problems stem from a lack of experience with reasoned arguments in his or her household or that the existence of cultural traditions discouraging the expression of personal opinion are responsible for the student's performance.[21]

In point of fact, however, before such statements can be made validly, research on background factors and their influence on writers must be carried out on different groups and compared with similar studies of mainstream students, their families, and their

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[21] Even though I have not found arguments such as these directly articulated in the literature, these types of judgments are implied in most of the work that focuses on "cultural" differences. I have, however, encountered the direct statement of these kinds of hypotheses among well-intentioned doctoral students who have sought my advice in proposing the verification of their conjectures as a dissertation topic.

communities. For example, it is easy to believe that the American middle class is made up of individuals who are highly literate and who use writing regularly in the course of their everyday lives, both at home and at work; however, it is becoming increasingly clear that the demands made by writing in educational institutions are unlike those made normally for most individuals. Except for families in which there are persons who make their living writing (e.g., college professors, writers, newspaper people, etc.), most mainstream children do not grow up in households where the functions and uses of writing match those found in the school and in the classroom.

The question, then, for those concerned with the study of bilingual minority students is how does the gap for these students compare with the gap for mainstream students? Does the magnitude of the gap depend on the class or educational background of the family as it does for mainstream students? Does it depend on the whether their communities of origin were or were not highly literate in particular ways? What does bridging the gap (of whatever magnitude) involve?

We need studies that focus on exactly how writing fits into the lives of both mainstream and minority families and communities. We need to understand when "ordinary" individuals (not those who write in their professions) write, how they write, what they write, and why. Before we paint a picture of minority families in which the absence of books leads us to the conclusion that members of the family seldom write, we must spend time observing these families closely as they go about their business. We must be aware, however, that seeing exactly how writing is used among specific groups of people may take a very long time. Even when long-term observational studies on the uses and functions of writing in specific families and communities are conducted and compared with studies of mainstream populations, there is still a danger of either overstating the impact of background factors or of minimizing their importance. Moreover, the notions that make up the construct of "background factors" are often fuzzy. Almost anything can be attributed to cultural differences.

In spite of this danger, however, a need clearly exists for studies that will allow us to understand how rules of interaction in a particular culture, how role relationships, and how traditions governing appropriate expression of feelings or beliefs have an impact on students when they write. We must seek to understand, for example, how a student's perception of his or her intended reader (e.g., teacher, other students, self) and the cultural traditions governing interactions with such individuals influence the manner in which the student develops an argument, persuades, or defines. If the intended reader is assumed to be the teacher, for example, how do bilingual minority students from different cultural backgrounds write for such a reader? Do they limit how they argue, what they recount, what they explain because the teacher is the sole audience? Do they consider certain kinds of writing (e.g., persuasion) to be inappropriate for addressing an instructor? Do they believe that certain kinds of narrative and narrative sequence are required for recounting events to different individuals (e.g., an inferior, a superior, a peer)? What about mainstream students? Are their cultural, familial, and personal rules of communication in harmony with expressing an opinion strongly, with explaining, with narrating? Do non-minority students also find problems in using certain kinds of writing? How are minority and non-minority students alike or different in this respect?

The relationship between speech and writing must also be taken into account in the study of the impact of background factors on writing. It cannot be assumed, for example, that because a student fails to develop coherent arguments in writing, that he or she also lacks the ability to structure such arguments in interactive settings orally using one or both languages. Before one suggests that the ability to structure discourse of a specific type is beyond the capabilities or experiences of students, it is important that a study be made of

the discourse organization in question as it occurs in normal interaction using the spoken language.

In comparison to investigating language and/or writing instruction as causes of students' problems, the investigation of background factors is much more difficult. Many subtle issues must be taken into account, most of which have not been investigated thoroughly. In addition, without information about the same background factors in mainstream populations and the impact of these factors on "good" writers, we will not be able to determine whether bilingual minority students are better, worse, or the same at overcoming limitations and at developing strategies for learning how to write well. What we do know is that even without much evidence, the writing of bilingual minority students is currently believed to be affected significantly by family background and by cultural values. However, much caution needs to be exercised in attributing to cultural background what may be, in fact, the effect of a combination of factors, all of which have a significant effect on writing and the writing process.

Toward Profession-Wide Responses to the New Challenge of Diversity

In order to break down compartments now existing within the profession, composition specialists must begin to see the "new" student population not as a special group destined to disappear quickly into the mainstream but as a population that will significantly change the character of the entire student community in this country. Tomorrow's mainstream student group will be made up of what we consider today to be "diverse" students.

The position I have taken here is that research on bilingual minority writers must be carried out by mainstream researchers as well as minority researchers and viewed as a legitimate focus of activity. Such research must be based on a good understanding of the nature of bilingualism and on long-term familiarity with research on the nature of writing. In my opinion, research on the writing of fluent/functional bilinguals, besides contributing to our understanding of how and whether language factors result in writing problems, also presents opportunities for researchers to expand the present focus on monolingual individuals that now dominates writing research to include a focus on persons who function comfortably and effectively in more than one language. The significance of this shift in focus will be evident to those concerned about the development of a theory of writing in the broadest sense. The fact is that theories about the nature of writing, writing development, the uses of writing, and the process of writing, cannot be said to correspond to external reality broadly if these theories do not account for the experiences of over half of the world's population, the half that can be placed along the bilingual continuum and classified as fluent and functional in two languages.

The study of the writing of fluent minority bilinguals, then, can be approached from two different perspectives: the perspective that limits its focus to the investigation of minority bilinguals and their success or failure in writing as a basis for problem-solving as well as the perspective that views the study of bilingual individuals as a means of more fully understanding the very nature of writing. The first perspective is concerned primarily with improving writing skills in minority bilinguals. It is concerned with how this population differs from monolingual populations only to the degree that it contributes to improving writing instruction and writing practice for minority bilinguals. The second perspective has a more theoretical orientation and is based on the assumption that, by using bilingual individuals to study questions of major theoretical interest, it will be able to strengthen the explanatory power of existing theories about the process and practice of writing in general. Both perspectives are of key importance to the profession if it is truly dedicated to addressing the needs of the new diverse population of students.

Bilingual individuals and their writing will continue to present challenges to the profession in the many years to come. It is time for compartmentalization between and within professions to end and for "mainstream" researchers and practitioners to begin to address these challenges.

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